

# Supplement purveyors may finally have to fess up about their products

By ACSH Staff — June 22, 2015



Last year a Senate committee dragged Dr. Mehmet Oz over

the coals for his promotion of dubious supplements on his TV show. Earlier this year Eric T. Schneiderman, the NY State attorney general, accused several stores of selling mislabeled and adulterated herbal supplements. After that, 14 state attorneys general asked Congress to further investigate the supplement industry.

That's a big request since the basic problem stems from a law, the Dietary Supplements Health and Education Act (DSHEA), that Congress and then-President Clinton passed in 1994. This law, as we've [explained](#) <sup>[1]</sup> in the past, treats dietary supplements like foods rather than drugs, which is what they are. There is no requirement for pre-market safety data being supplied to the FDA. But maybe the situation with supplements has finally gotten so bad that even Congress will see a need to act.

Senator Claire McCaskill (D-Mo), heroine of the 2014 anti-Oz committee hearings we [applauded](#) <sup>[2]</sup>, now has purveyors of probably fraudulent supplements in her sights. As the top-ranking Democrat on the Senate Special Committee on Aging, she has lately [focused](#) <sup>[3]</sup> on supplements whose manufacturers and/or distributors promote them as protective against Alzheimer's disease, cognitive decline, stroke and other ills. In particular, she has sent letters to 15 companies and retailers requesting explanations of their marketing of dietary supplements as well as of their policies on removal of adulterated, improperly labeled or fraudulently marketed ones.

Those companies were not her only target: Senator McCaskill also requested the FDA to provide information about any enforcement actions it had taken against companies making illegal claims (e.g., that their products can cure or treat a disease). Perhaps this inquiry and its results will demonstrate the restrictions on the FDA due to DSHEA.

ACSH's Dr. Ruth Kava had this to say: We can only hope that Senator McCaskill's committee will continue what she began last year with her skewering of Dr. Oz. The fact that the attorneys general of 15 states are now clued into the deficiencies of DSHEA gives us reason to hope that this law, written by supplement industry protectors, will finally be amended to do what its name implies: provide consumers with accurate information about any dietary supplements they decide to take.

**Source URL:** <https://www.acsh.org/news/2015/06/22/supplement-purveyors-may-finally-have-to-fess-up-about-their-products>

**Links**

[1] <http://acsh.org/2014/10/fda-recalls-end-adulterated-dietary-supplements/>

[2] <http://acsh.org/2014/06/senator-claire-mccaskill-sets-trap-lizard-oz-stumbles/>

[3] <http://well.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/06/19/alzheimers-supplements-targeted-by-u-s-senator/?hp&action=click&pgtype=Homepage&module=second-column-region&region=top-news&WT.nav=top-news>